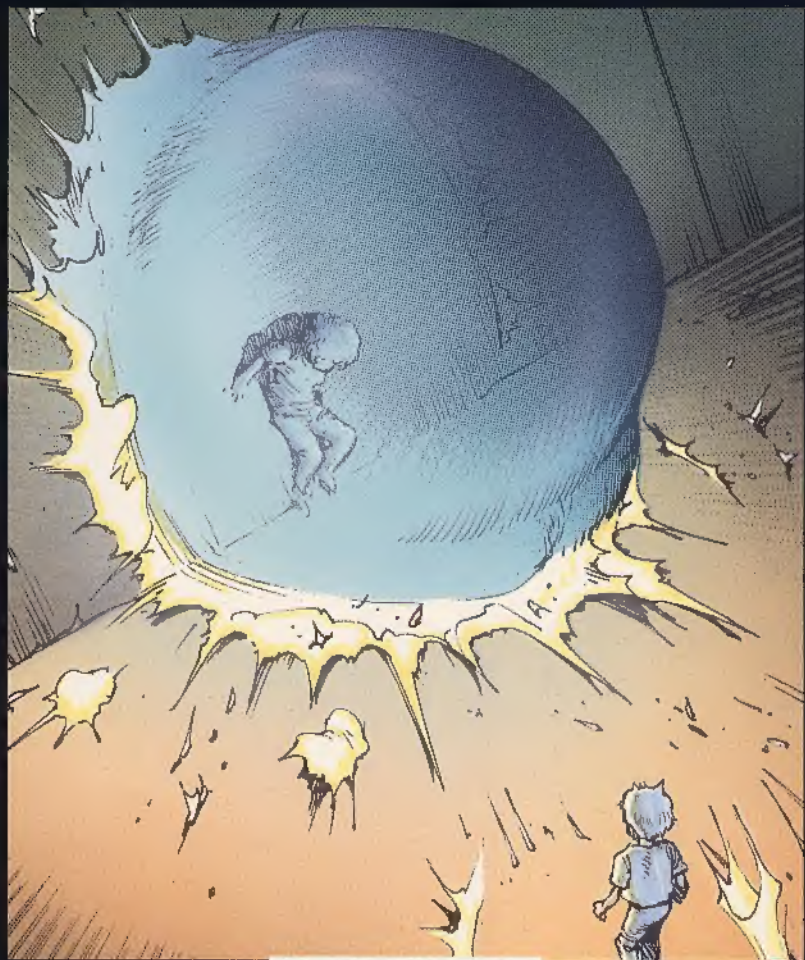


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KATSUHIRO OTOMO

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AKIRA

BY KATSUHIRO OTOMO

Chapter 15

PSYCHIC DUEL

WHAT HAS GONE BEFORE

The year is 2030. The world is rebuilding from World War III. In **Neo-Tokyo**, plans are being made to hold the next Olympics in the "old city"—where, thirty-eight years before, the first of the bombs fell. There, a band of teenaged delinquents led by **Kaneda** encounter **Number 26**—a child named **Takashi** who uses extraordinary telekinetic abilities to injure **Tetsuo**, one of Kaneda's close friends.

The result is **Kaneda** and **Tetsuo** become entangled in a power struggle between a mysterious military and scientific organization led by a man known only as the **Colonel** and an underground resistance group, bent on stopping the Colonel's activities.

Among the resistance, **Kaneda** meets **Kay**—a girl he

alternately maddens and tries to seduce—and Kay's "brother", **Ryu**. The resistance leaders include Ryu's superior, **Nezu**—who publicly leads the political party that opposes the government—and a powerful religious leader with strong precognitive gifts, **Lady Miyako**.

The **Colonel** has a number of children under his control. Each child possesses a distinct set of psychic talents and is identified by a number marked on the hand. At one time **Lady Miyako** was Number 19 in this series. Another of the children is the mental giant **Akira**, so powerful that since the war he has been buried beneath the earth's surface, suspended in cryogenic sleep.

The Colonel's staff subjects Tetsuo to painful experiments which awaken tremendous telepathic potential in the boy, who is redubbed Number 41. Unfortunately, as Tetsuo's powers appear, a monstrous side of his nature also surfaces. Able to shrug off the most serious injuries, **Tetsuo** goes on a killing spree. He murders one of Kaneda's friends and even attacks Kaneda.

Unable to tolerate the notion that **Akira** may be more power-



Kaneda



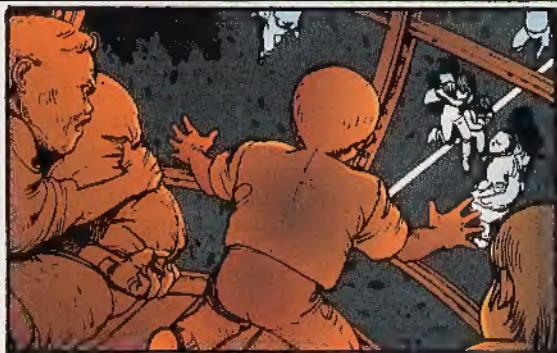
Kay



Tetsuo



Akira



ful than he is, **Tetsuo** sets out to find his rival. The psychic children like, **Lady Miyako**, fear Akira's power and worry about the disaster **Tetsuo** may unleash. They use their talents to help **Kaneda** and **Kay** follow **Tetsuo** to the Olympic site, below which **Akira** rests. There, they are almost reunited with **Ryu**, who is working undercover as a soldier.

Hoping to prevent a disaster, the **Colonel** follows with his troops and scientists. **Tetsuo** easily repels soldiers armed with the most sophisticated weaponry. Meanwhile, the scientists monitoring Akira's cryogenic sleep realize that even in hibernation, Akira's power is responding to Tetsuo's psychic energy.

Kay and **Kaneda** watch from hiding as **Tetsuo** reaches Akira's resting place. The cryogenic chamber begins to crack from within, and **Akira** emerges.

The paranormal giant is still dazed and weak with the after-effects of his coma. **Akira** is unable to speak, shy of bright lights, and easily ordered about. **Tetsuo** and he begin to make their way to the surface, followed by **Kay** and **Kaneda**.

Terrified of what may occur the **Colonel** summons the powerful SDI military satellite and orders that its laser cannon be fired at **Tetsuo** and **Akira**. The two are separated by the blasts. **Akira** is saved by **Kay** and **Kaneda**, but **Tetsuo** is less fortunate. The laser strikes his left arm.



The Colonel



Kiyoko



Takashi



Ryu

Neo-Tokyo is placed in a state of military emergency following the disaster. "Caretaker robots" patrol the streets, dealing harshly with looters and restoring order. The **Colonel** successfully conceals the truth about what has occurred despite leaks to the media, but he is discredited and made a scapegoat following the disaster. He decides to use the emergency as an excuse to hunt down and destroy the resistance once and for all.

Lady Miyako correctly divines that **Nezu** is no longer to be trusted. She calls upon **Sakaki**, a young girl trained in techniques of infiltration, observation, and combat, and asks her to find **Akira**.

Kay and **Kaneda** take shelter with **Chiyoko**, a formidable woman in the resistance. **Ryu**, unaware of what has occurred, reports to **Nezu**, who scornfully denies all knowledge of **Kay**—with whom he has been in contact. **Nezu** says nothing of **Akira**, planning to exploit the still-somnolent child for his own purposes. **Kay** brings **Akira** to **Nezu**, who orders his staff to kill **Kay**, **Kaneda**, and **Chiyoko**. The three manage to escape and head for **Nezu's** home, where **Akira** is hidden.

Nezu is caught breaking curfew by soldiers who open fire on his car. Secretly followed by **Ryu**, **Nezu** and his chauffeur evade the army and survive the attack of a caretaker robot. By the time **Nezu** arrives home, the government has been overthrown by the Colonel's inner circle, and a provisional military regime is in place.

Kay, **Kaneda**, and **Chiyoko** manage to free **Akira**, only to have him stolen from them again. This time it is **Sakaki**, who almost succeeded in an earlier, similar attempt. Now, she is aided by two other girls, **Miki** and **Mozu**. The **Colonel**, who is frantically trying to find **Akira** before he fully awakens, arrives on the scene with his three psychic wards. The three warn their master that **Sakaki** and her allies are also psychically gifted, although not as strongly as themselves.

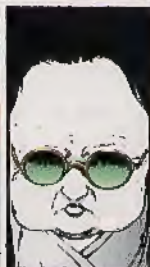
Mayhem erupts, and **Kay**, **Kaneda**, and **Chiyoko** commandeer a tank and enter the thick of it. **Nezu** corners **Sakaki** and **Akira**, but before he can harm them, **Miki** sacrifices her life to enable the pair to escape. Enraged, **Nezu** orders his soldiers to bring **Sakaki** and **Akira** back, dead or alive.



Chiyoko



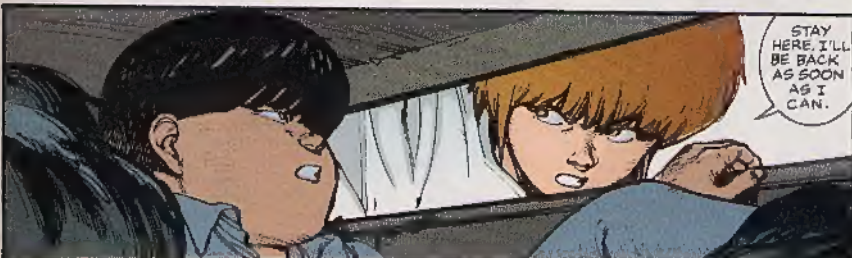
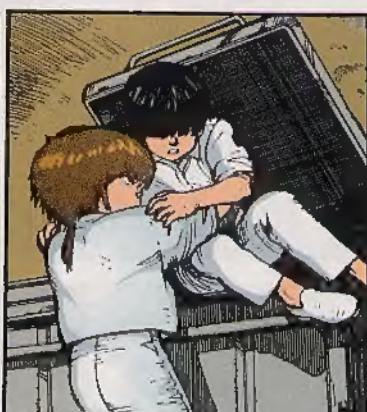
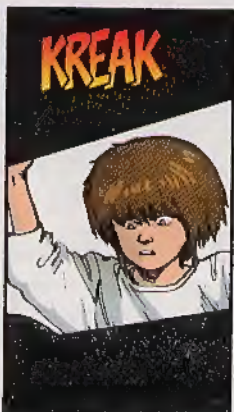
Nezu

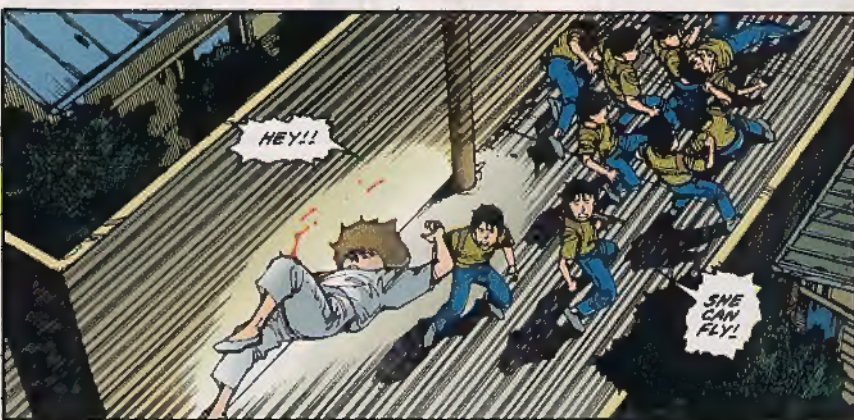


Lady Miyako



Sakaki



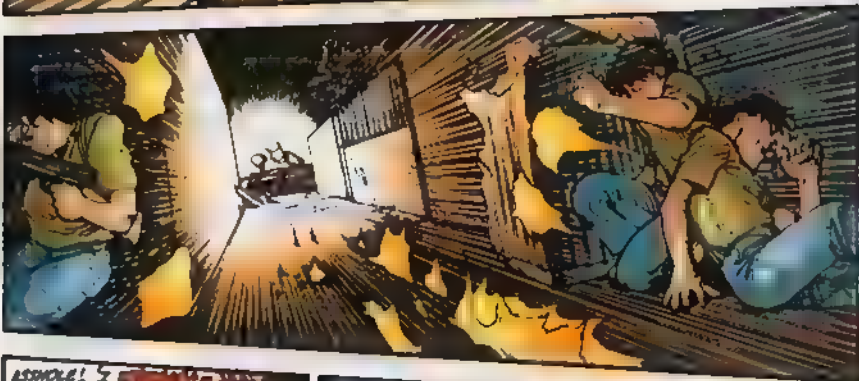


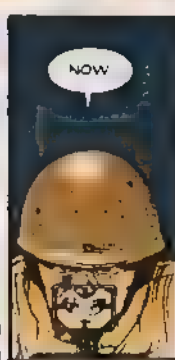
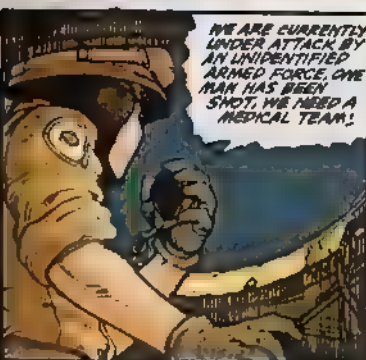
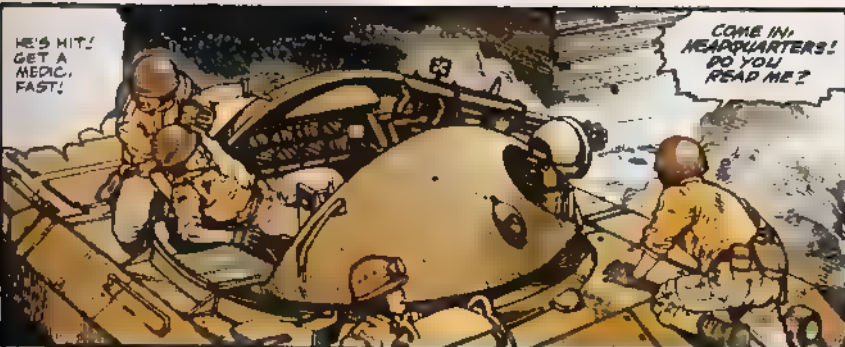


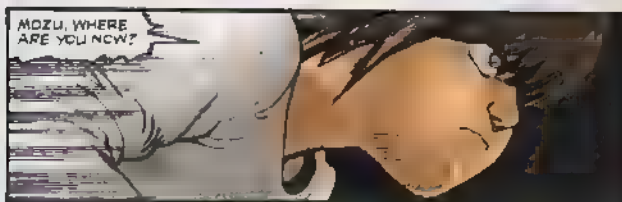
SHE'S SO FAST!

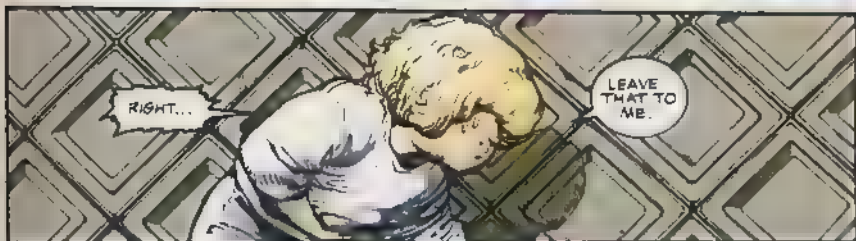
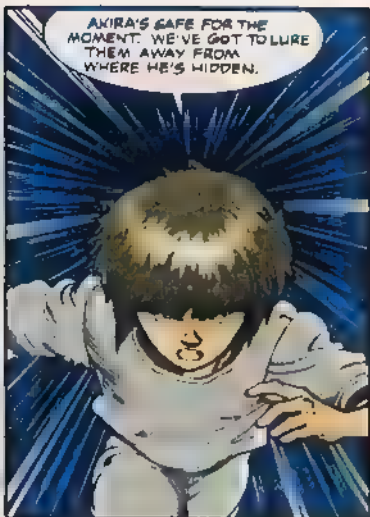
THOSE ARE NEZU'S PRIVATE GUARDS.











THE ARMED GROUP IS UNIMPORTANT. FINDING AKIRA IS OUR TOP PRIORITY.

ka-klunk

ROGER!

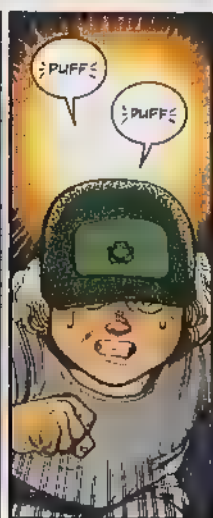
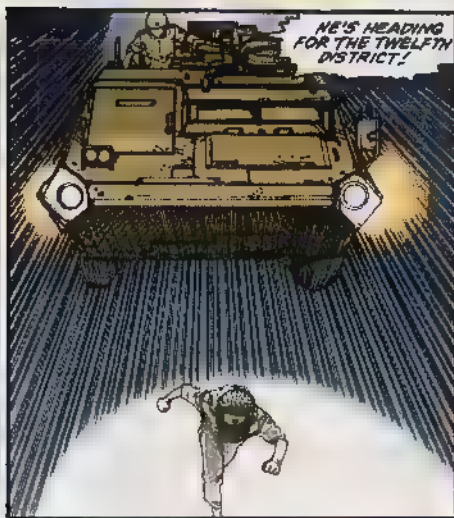
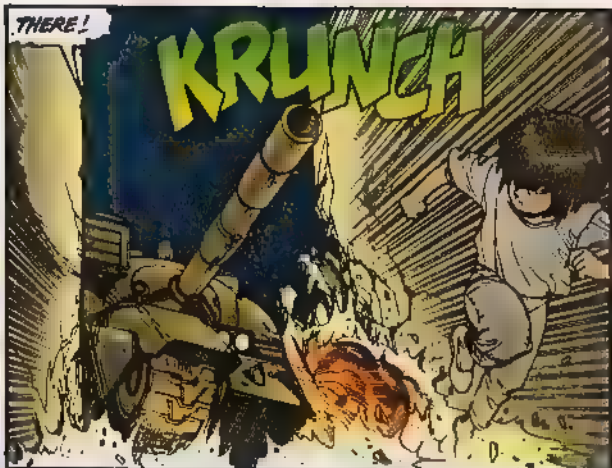
?

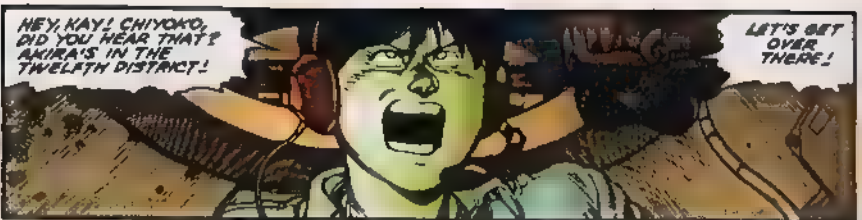
ssh

HEADQUARTERS. DO YOU COPY? WE'VE SIGHTED A CHILD DRESSED IN WHITE.

IT COULD BE AKIRA! WE'RE IN PURSUIT. OUR PRESENT LOCATION IS THE CORNER OF SECOND STREET AND SAKAE AVENUE.

COME ON! AROUND THAT CORNER!



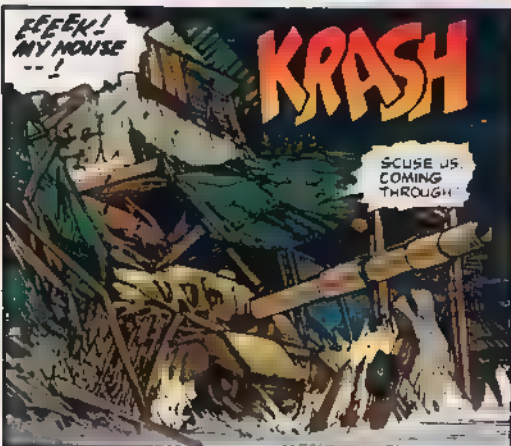


HEY, KAY! CHIYOKO,
DID YOU HEAR THAT?
AKIRA'S IN THE
TWELFTH DISTRICT!

LET'S GET
OVER
THERE!



KANEDA,
YOU MORON!
FIRST YOU GET
US INTO THIS
MESS, AND
NOW YOU
WANT
TO TAKE
US WHERE?



EEK!
MY HOUSE
--!

KRASH

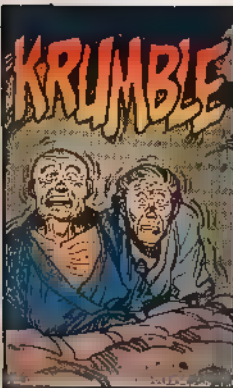
SCUSE US,
COMING
THROUGH



Link Link

SO SORRY

DARLING!
SPEAK TO ME!



KRUMBLE



NEATO!
COULD
YOU
DO
THAT
AGAIN?



TRY STAYING
ON THE ROAD NEXT
TIME, STUPID!

YIFE!

MO-OOO-M!
THE HOUSE
FELL IN!

HELP!

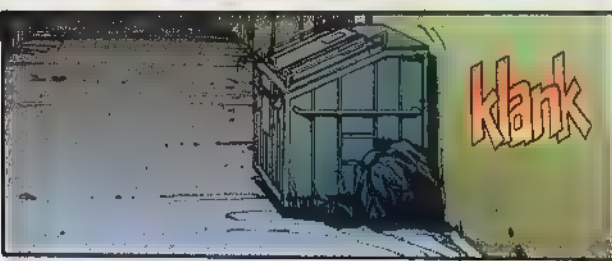
COCKA-DOODLE DOO!

MY
GOD!

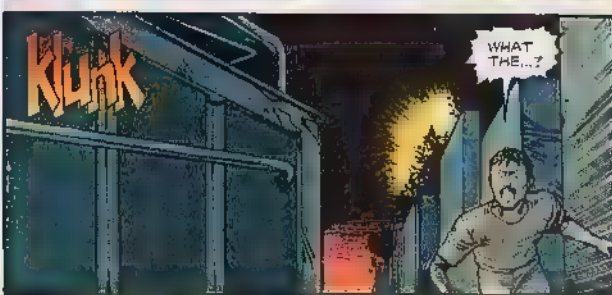
unkunkunk



SHIT!
IT'S
ALMOST
DAWN.

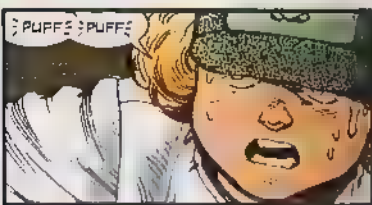
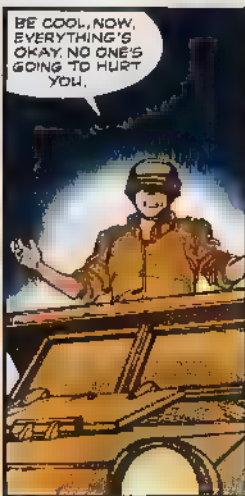
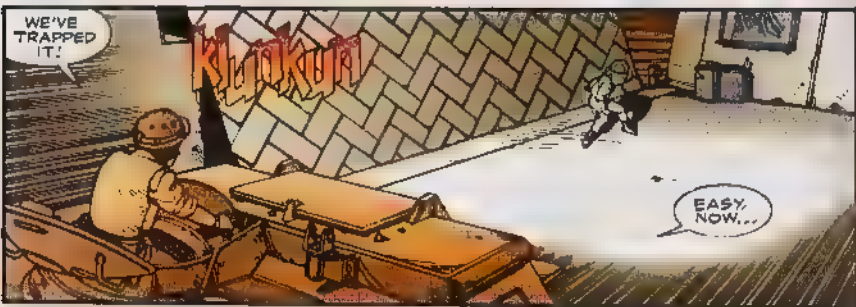
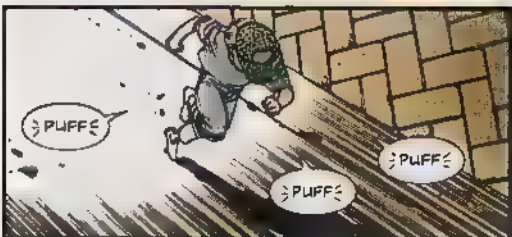


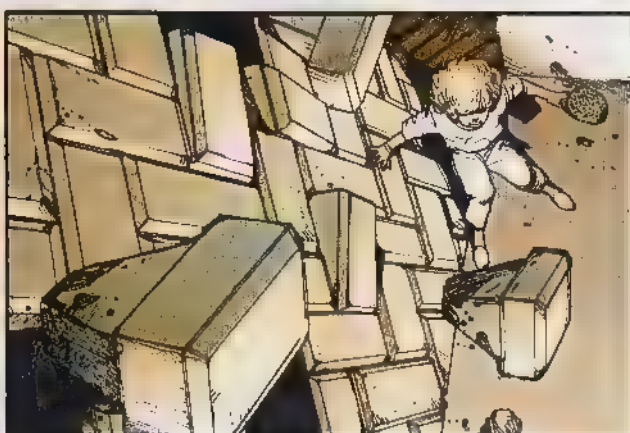
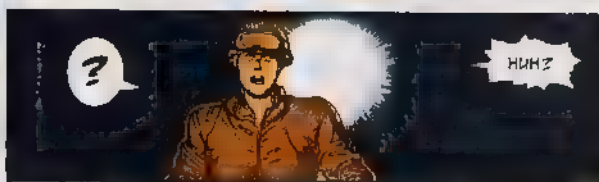
klank

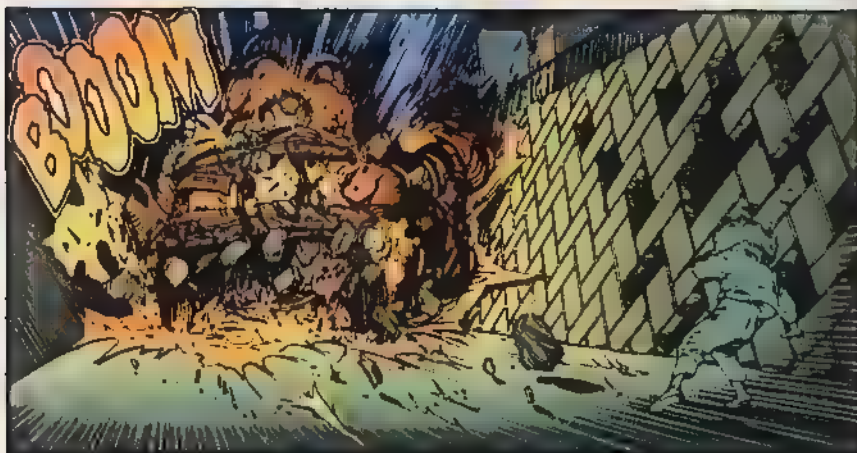
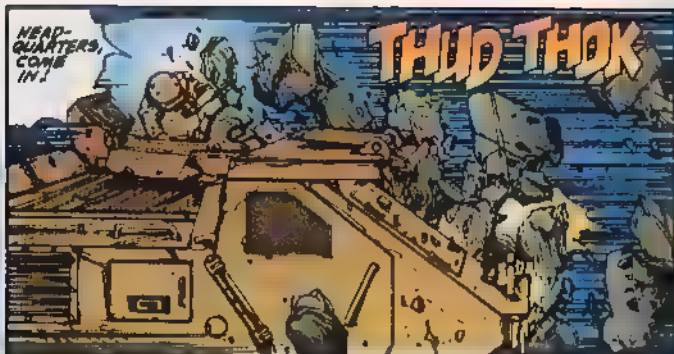


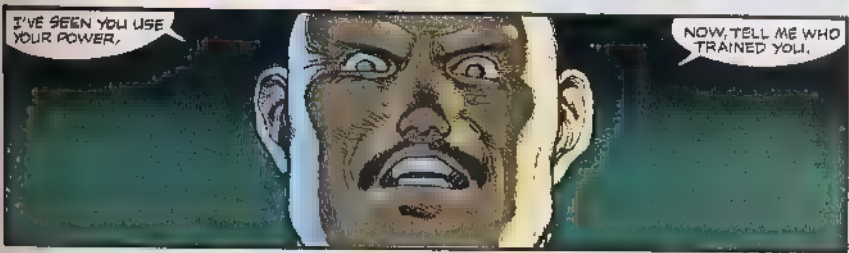
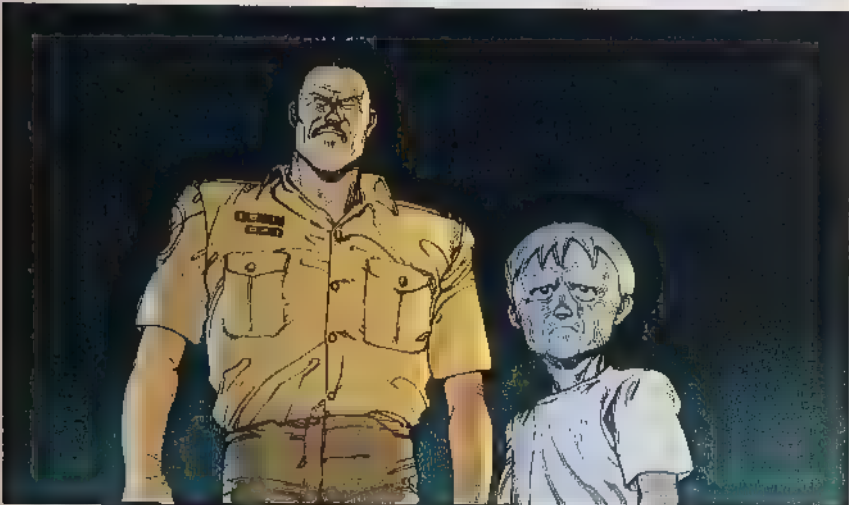
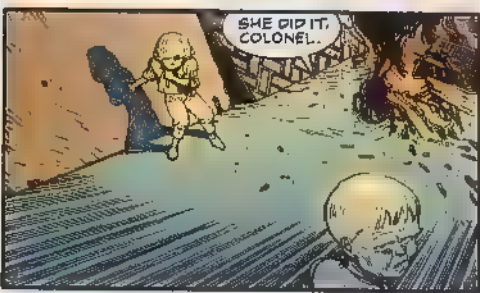
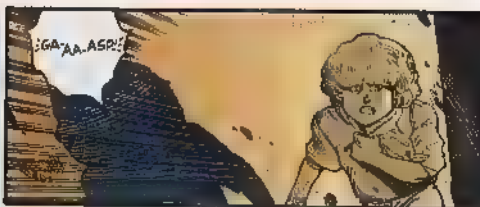
Klunk

WHAT
THE...?









G-GO...

GO TO
HELL.

TEST HER POWER,
TAKASHI.

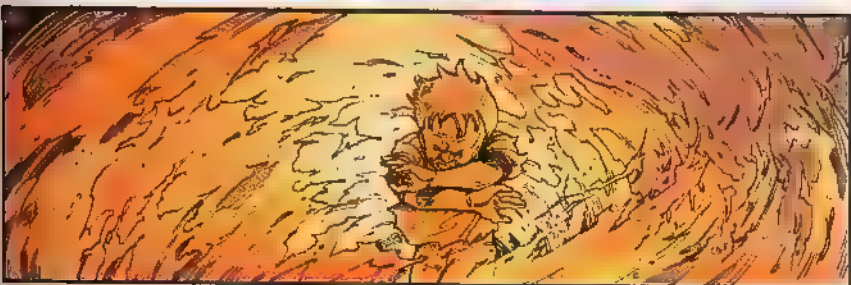
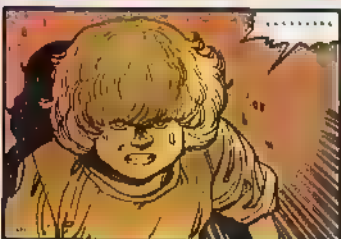
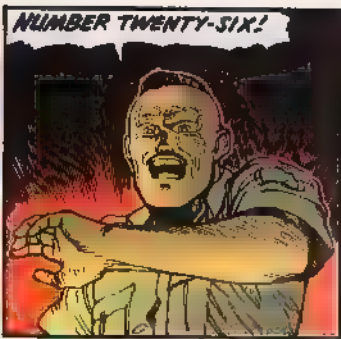
WHAT?

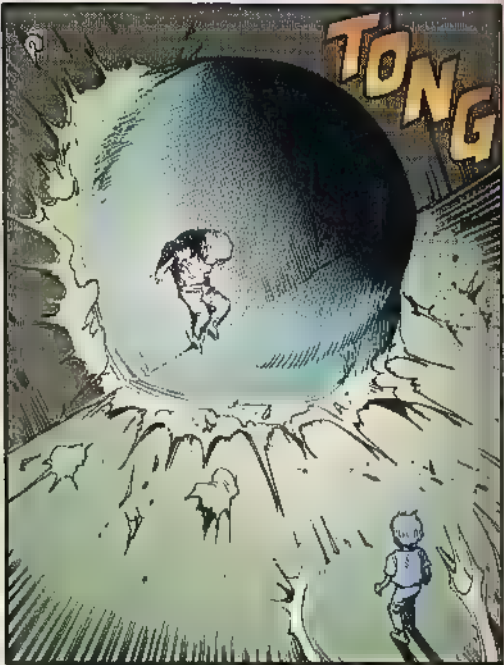
BUT
SHE...SHE
JUST...

NOW, SHE
CAN TAKE
IT.

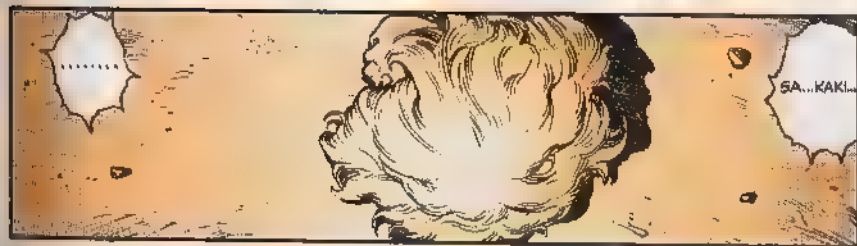
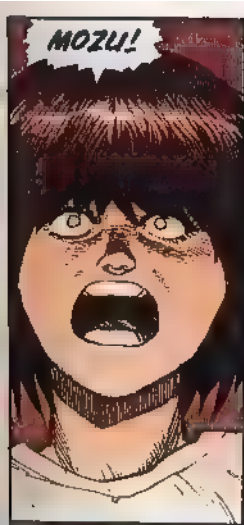
I'LL
KILL
YOU!

GONG

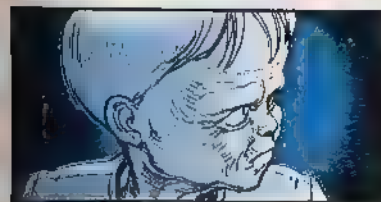
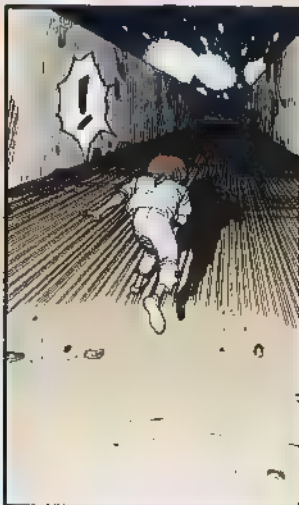




MOZU!



R-RUN...



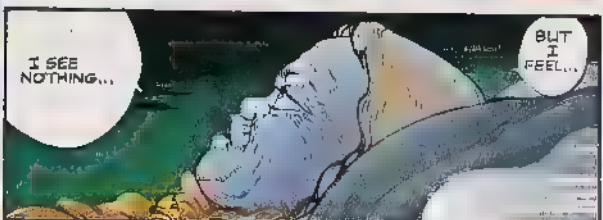




MAGURU...

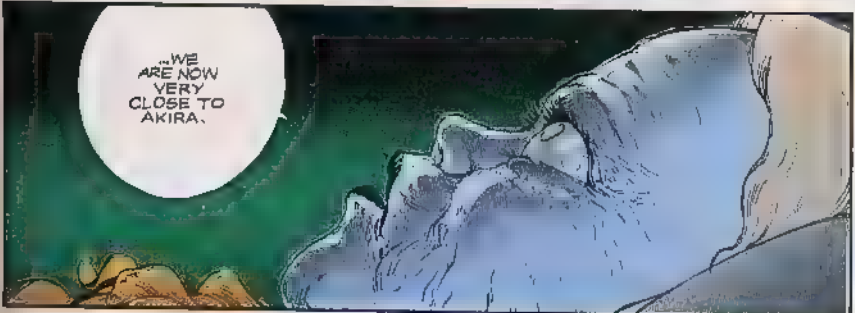


WELL... CAN
YOU SEE
ANYTHING?
WHAT
WILL
HAPPEN?

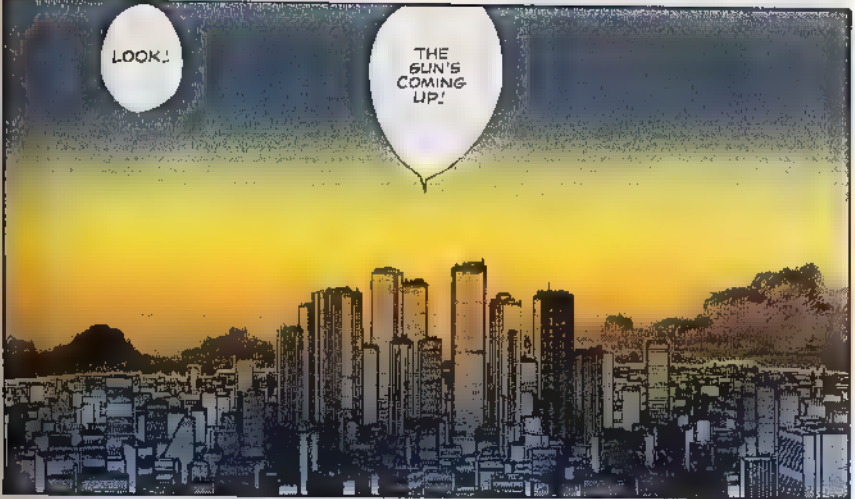


I SEE
NOTHING...

BUT
I
FEEL...

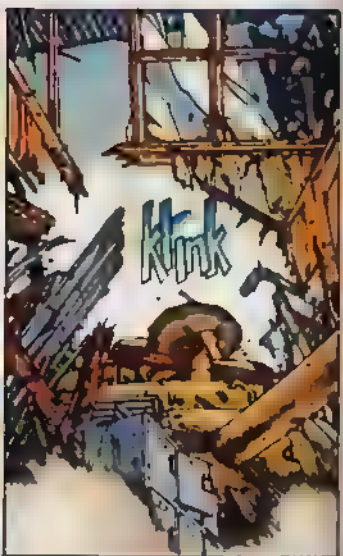
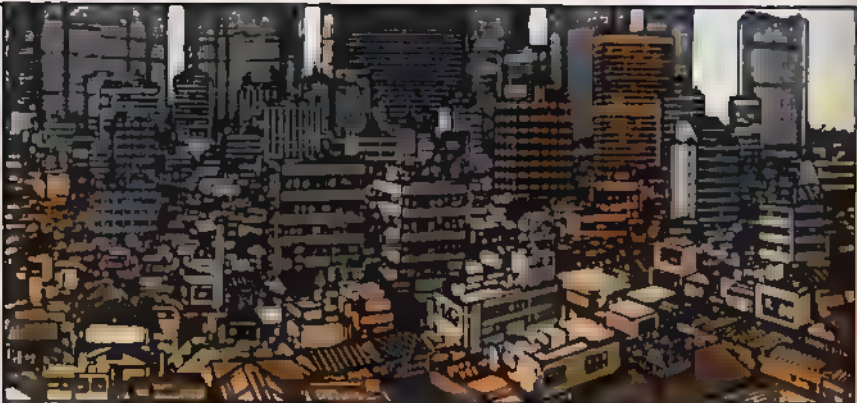


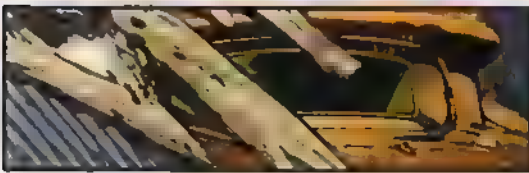
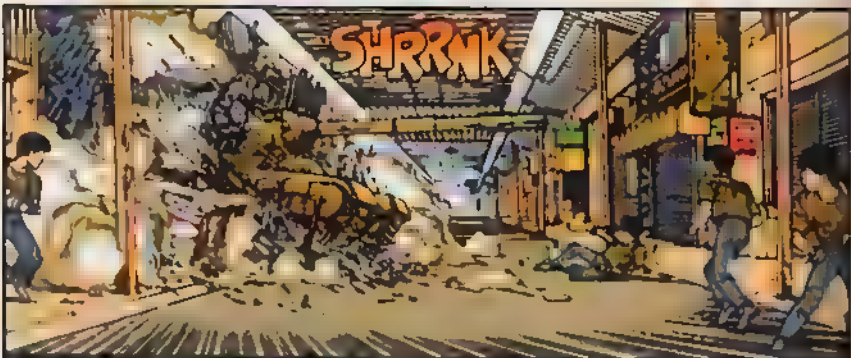
...WE
ARE NOW
VERY
CLOSE TO
AKIRA.



LOOK!

THE
SUN'S
COMING
UP!





WHOSE IDEA WAS
THIS SHORT CUT,
ANYWAY?

IT'S FULL OF
NEZU'S MEN AND A
LOT OF HEAVY-DUTY
MILITARY HARDWARE.
WHAT WILL WE DO,
CHUYOBE?

WHAT WE'VE
BEEN DOING, KAY.
ROLL RIGHT OVER
THEM.

MIGHT AS WELL. I KEEP
FORGETTING WE'VE
GOT OUR OWN TANK.

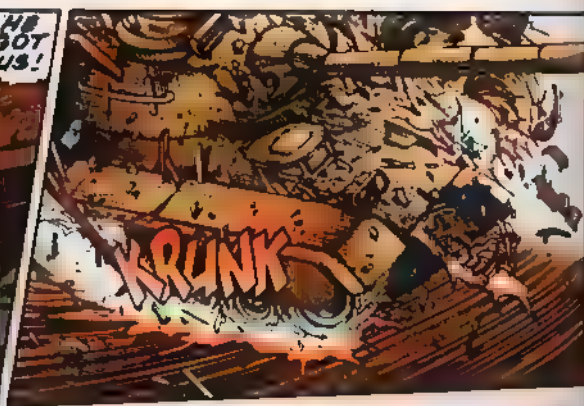
RRUNK

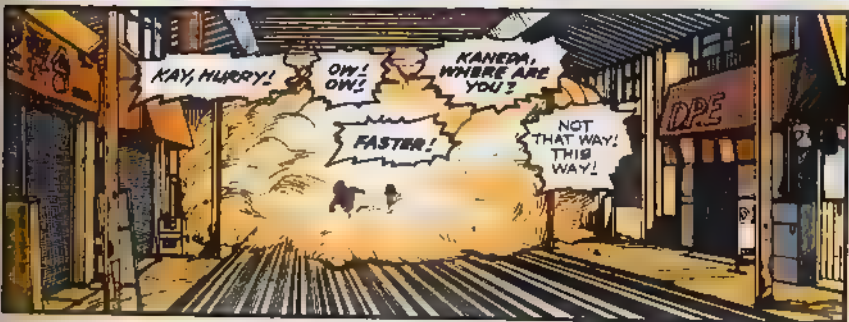
DAMN
YOU!!

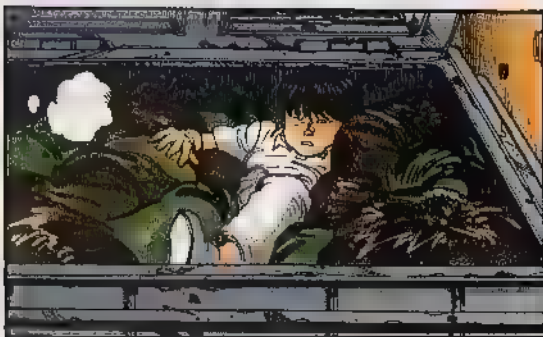
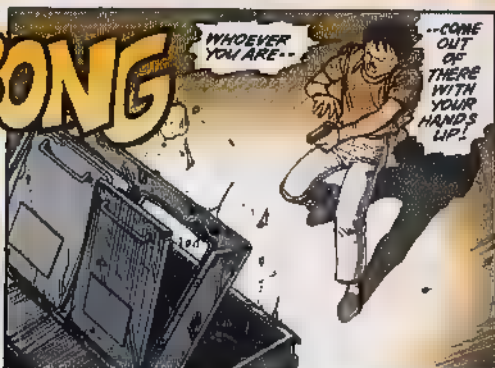
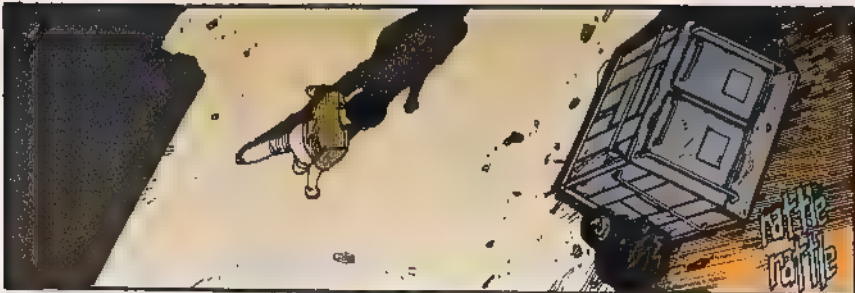
TUNK

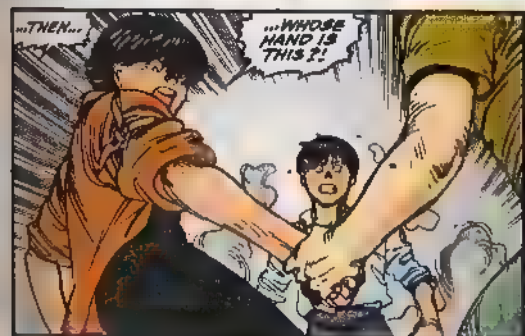
POW

FWHOOM

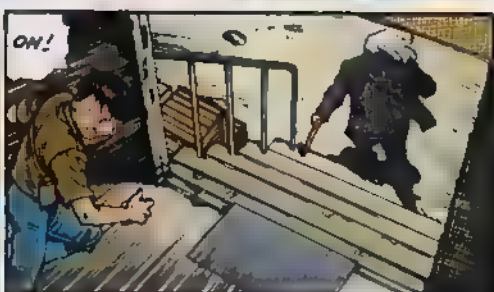
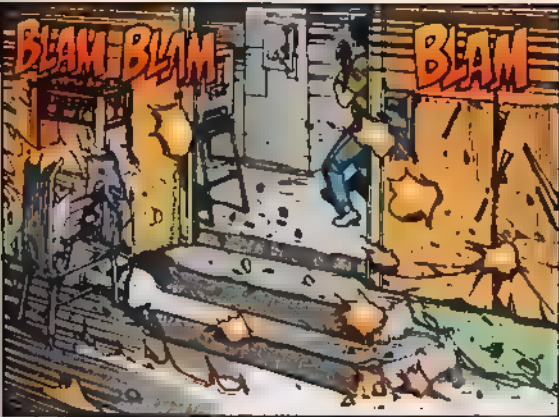












tap tap
tap tap

PUFF

PUFF

PUFF

tap tap

tap tap

BLAM
BLAM

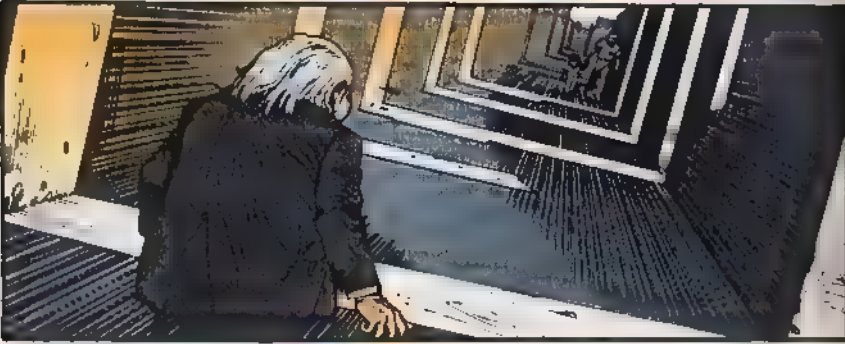
PUFF

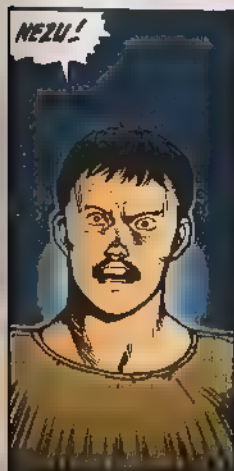
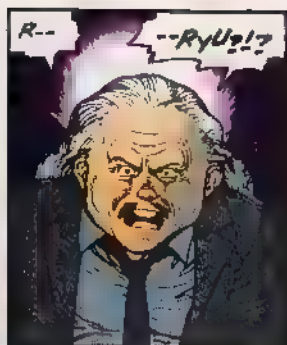
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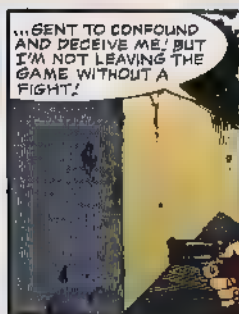
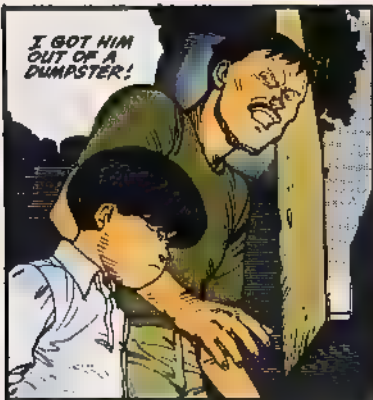
PUFF

AND
JUST WHEN
EVERYTHING
WAS GOING
SO WELL,
TOO!

ENN??



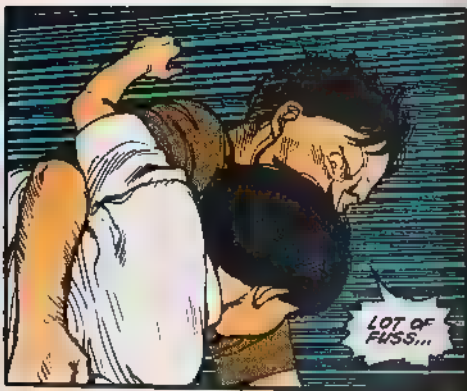








SO YOU'RE AKIRA, HUNH?



LOT OF FUSS...



...FOR SUCH A LITTLE GUY!

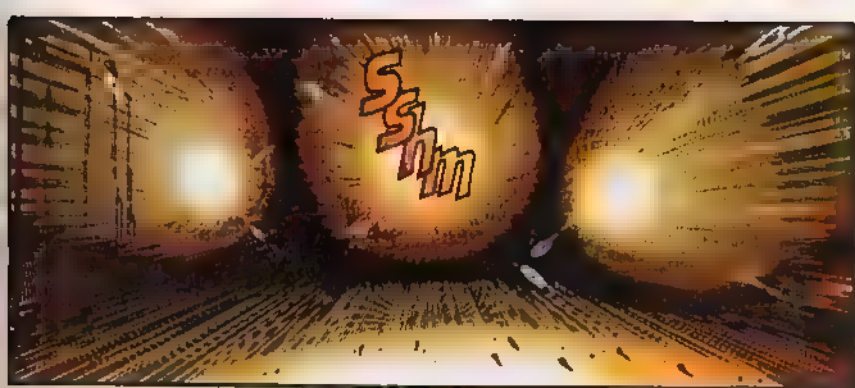


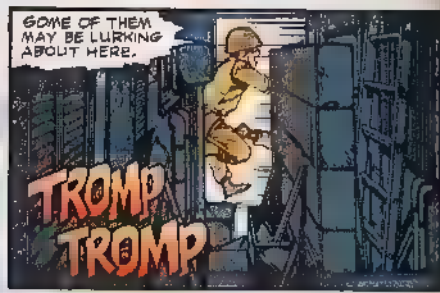
MOZU...

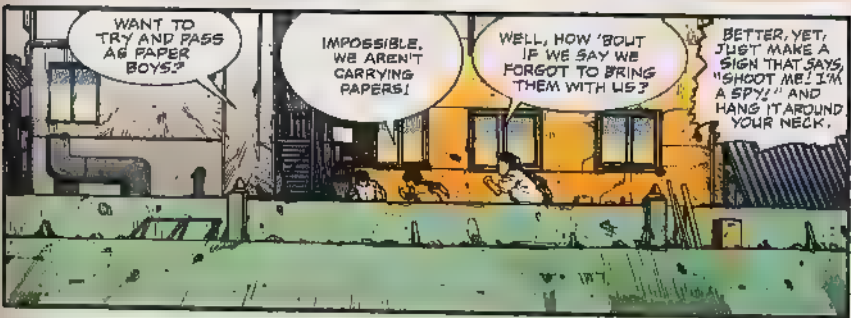
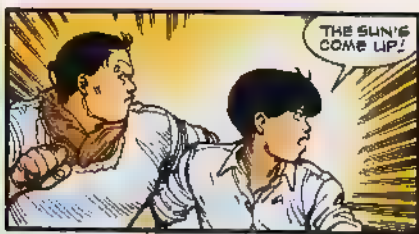
MIKI...

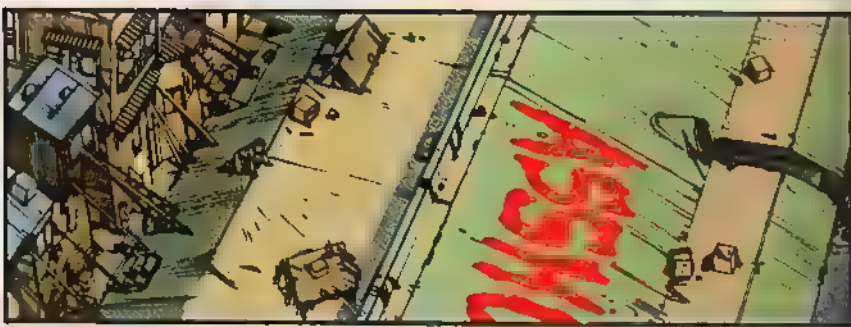


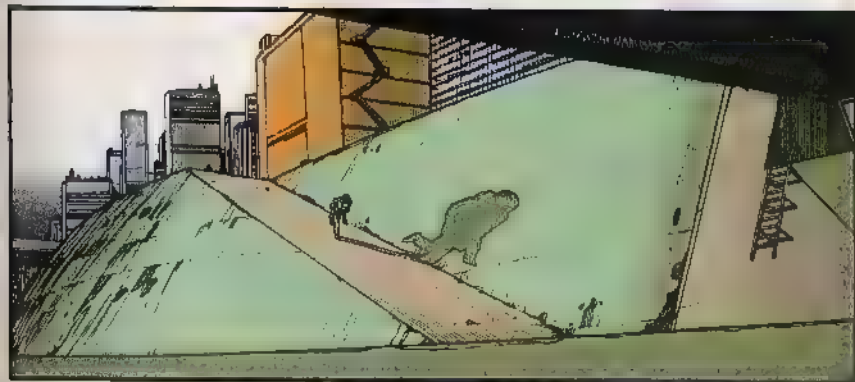
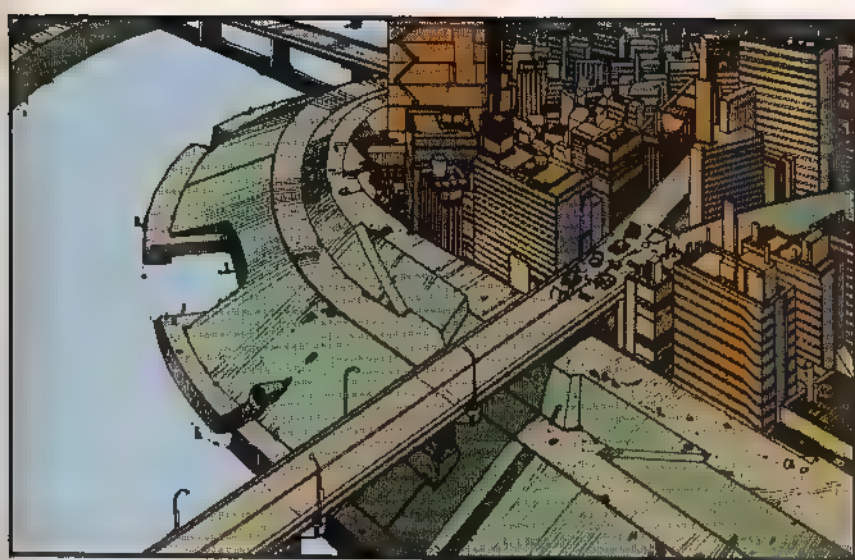
HURRY!



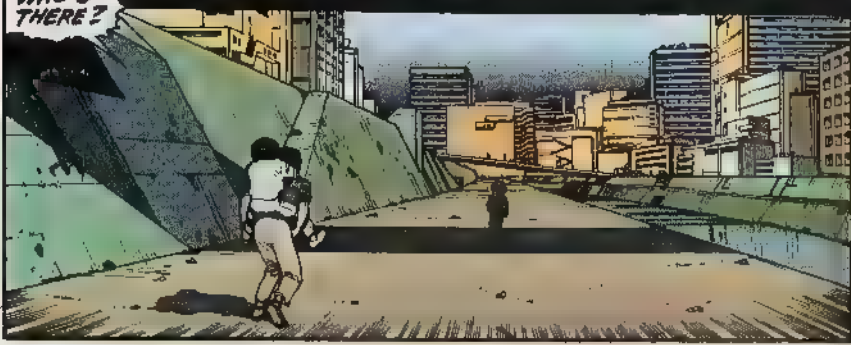






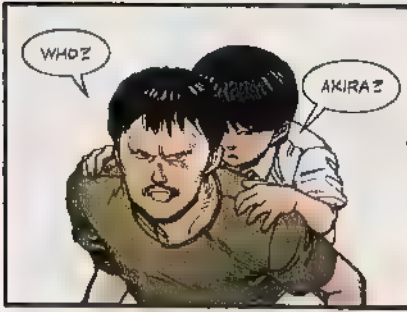


WHO'S THERE?



WHERE...

...ARE YOU TAKING THAT BOY?



WHO?

AKIRA?



YOU NO LONGER...

...WORK FOR NEZU, DO YOU?

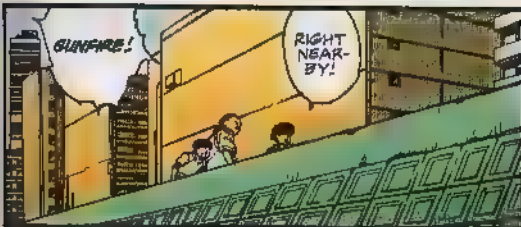
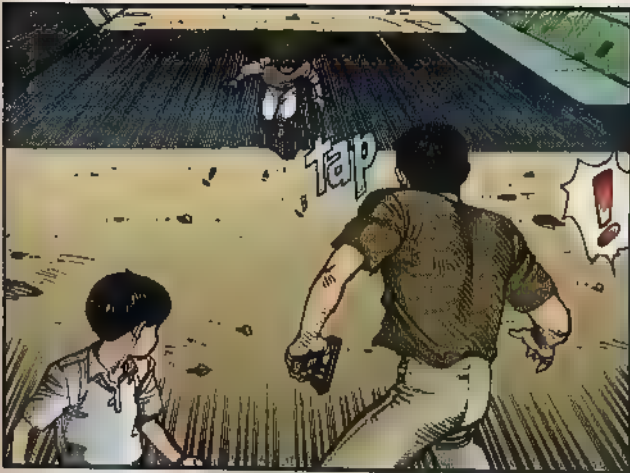


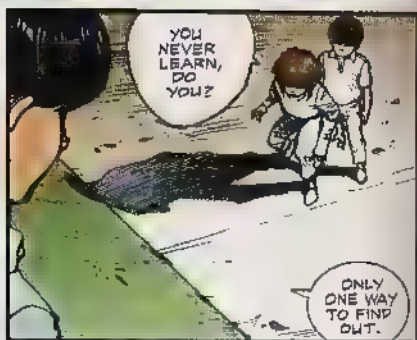
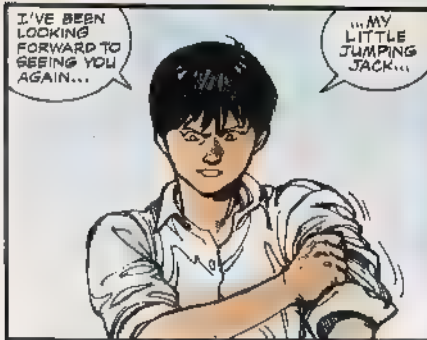
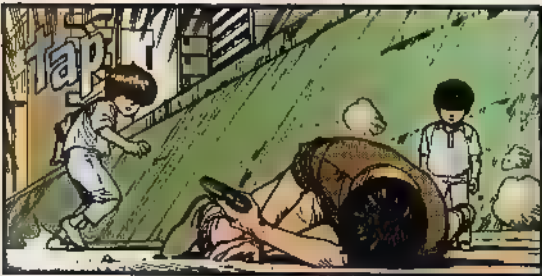
HOW 'BOUT YOU?



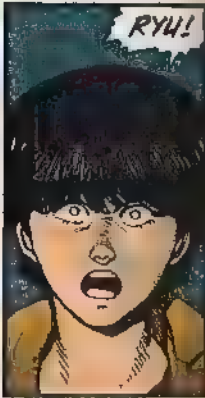
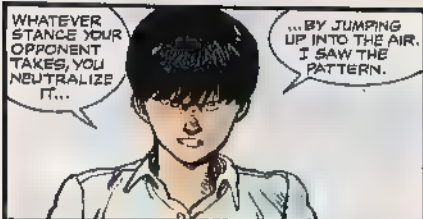
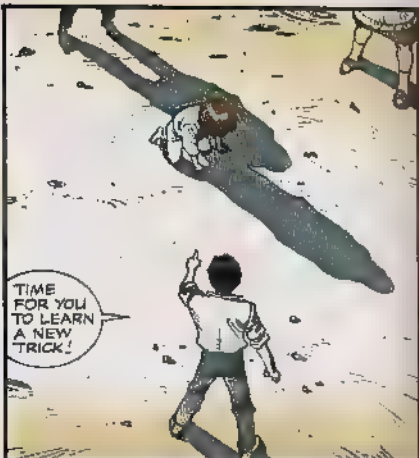
I DOUBT YOU'RE JUST SOME STREET URCHIN WHO TURNED UP HERE BY CHANCE.

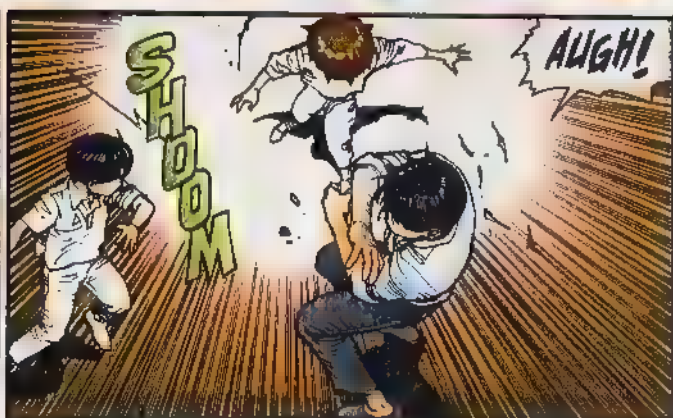
I CAN'T WASTE TIME.

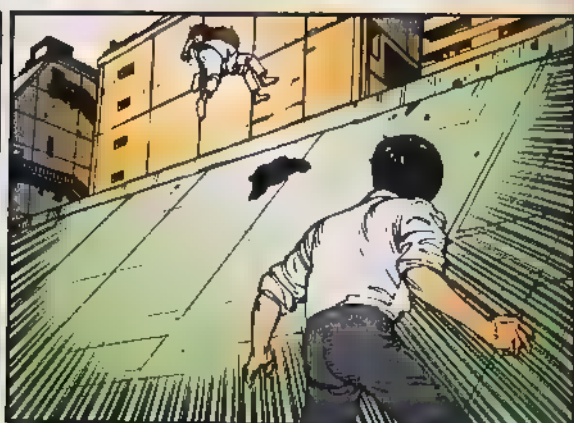




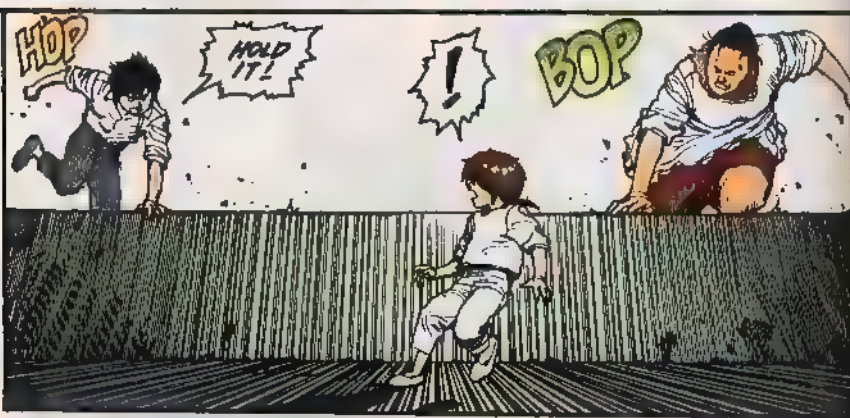


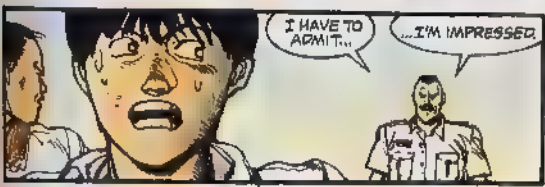
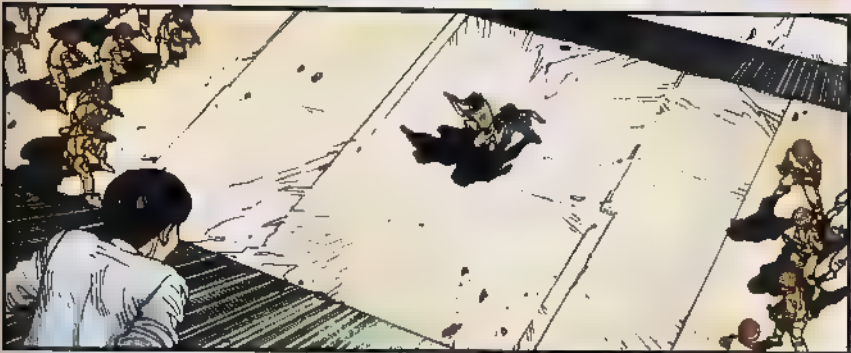










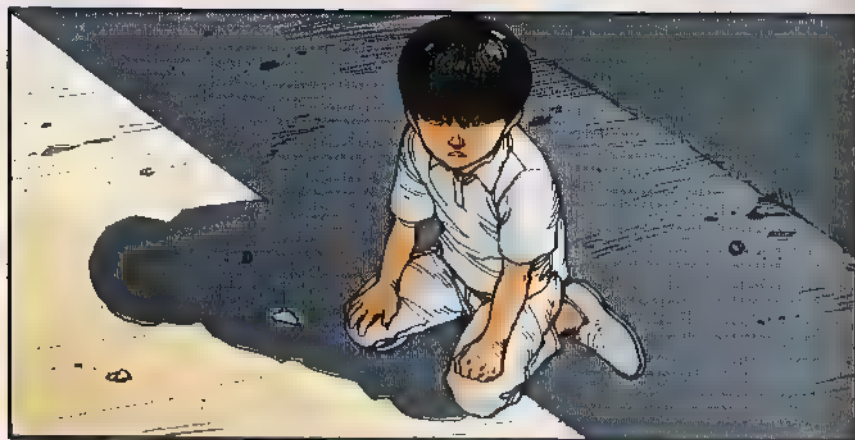


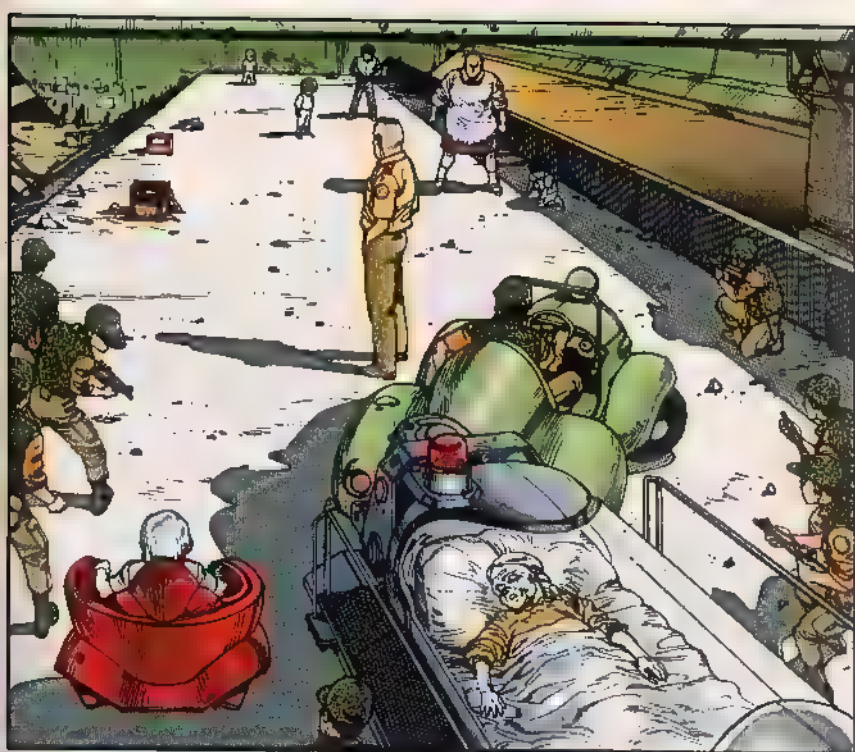
THIS, OF COURSE,
IS THE END.

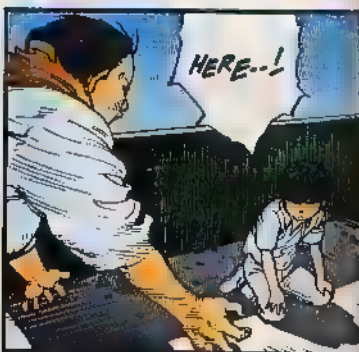
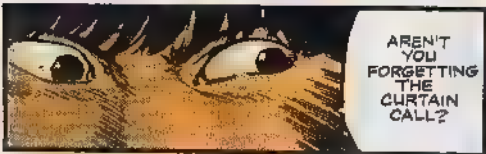
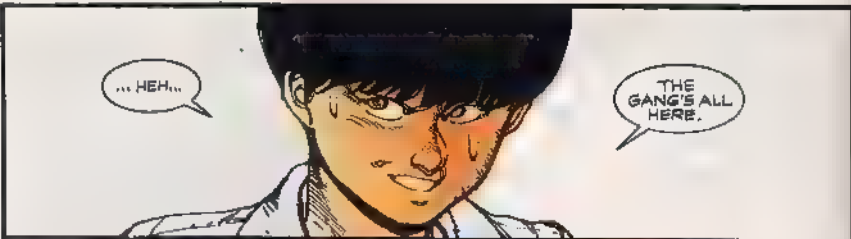
WANNA
BET?

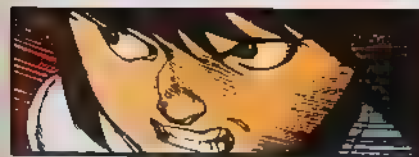
MY FORCES CONTROL
EVERYTHING WITHIN
A TWENTY-MILE
RADIUS. BY NOON
TODAY...

... 70% OF ALL
NEO-TOKYO WILL
BE UNDER MY
JURISDICTION.









NEXT ISSUE: **AKIRA UNLEASHED**

THE MAKING OF AKIRA

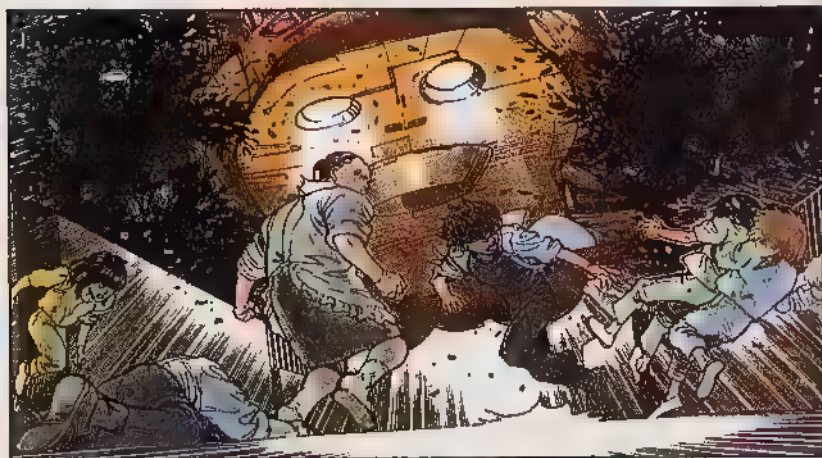
THE EPIC COMIC

PART III—COLORING

When **Akira** is printed in Japan, it is printed in black and white. The American version, however, is meticulously colored by Steve Oliff and his Olyoptics staff. This month we will examine the coloring of **Akira**, step by step.

As detailed in **Part I** of **The Making of Akira**, Kodansha first makes "mirror" proofs of Katsuhiro Otomo's original artwork. A large set of proofs (10" x 15") is sent to Epic Comics for scripting and paste-up. An identical but smaller set of proofs (7" x 10¾") is sent to Steve Oliff for coloring.

Using felt pens, airbrushing, and gouache, Oliff colors in these proofs. These "color guides" are then sent to Otomo and Kodansha for approval and any necessary corrections.



Color guides, like the one above, are used by Olyoptics to assign computer colors to regions of artwork.



A panel of Oliff's coloring without Otomo's black line artwork.

In the meantime, Epic Comics sends the larger proofs, complete with pasted-up lettering, to Olyoptics. The proofs are entered into the Olyoptics computer system, utilizing proprietary software developed by Pixelcraft, by way of a scanner.

Following the "color guides," Oliff and his staff of five then enter colors for each proof into the computer program. "This," says Oliff, "is where we fill in the subtle shadings."

After coloring on the computer system, Oliff saves all the information onto floppy disks. He sends the disks, along with the line art and color file to Network Color, the company that is responsible for outputting the film. The info is loaded into Network Color's linotype machine, and the resulting output is chromalins.

A chromalin, or chrom, is a mechanical generation of each color plate registered to itself. It represents how each color is printed separately and then combined together to form a visual representation of the final product. In short, an early version of the final **Akira** is produced, and sent to Epic Comics.

The Epic staff examines each chrom carefully, checking for errors in coloring and printing. After indicating the errors on the chroms, Epic returns the chroms to Network Color and corrections are made on the film.

Following the corrections, the final film goes to the printer. "Blues" are made from the film. "Blues" are an actual representation of how the final comic will appear—minus the color. The pages are instead printed in shades of blue. At this point, Epic checks for final corrections, and makes sure that all the pages are present and in order, and the blues are returned to the printer for printing.

Steve Oliff colors using the same computer system as the one used for most Marvel Comics. The difference is that Oliff colors the final film himself, while other Marvel Comics send color guides to the separator, who then assigns the colors using the computer. Oliff, in other words, acts as both the colorist and the separator. **Akira** is the first regular comic book in the world to be colored using such a system.



NEXT MONTH: Working on **Akira** at Epic.

A "chrom", with errors indicated by Epic staffmembers, is sent to the engraver for corrections on the final film.

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writer/illustrator

YASUMITSU SUETAKE
chief assistant to Mr. Otomo

MAKOTO SHIOSAKI
SATOSHI TAKABATAKE
assistants to Mr. Otomo

HIROSHI HIRATA
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MICHAEL HIGGINS
letterer

HARRY CANDELARIO
production

MARIE JAVINS
assistant editor

MARGARET CLARK
editor

CARL POTTS
executive editor

If you listen you can hear it. Stop. Stand still. Listen. It is the sound of the city of Neo-Tokyo. It is not a living being but somehow it knows. It hears the gunfire, the cries of the wounded, the tattoo of running, scurrying feet. It knows that something is going to happen. So, the city holds its breath and waits. It remembers Akira. It knows.

KATSUHIRO OTOMO'S

AKIRA



This scan produced by:

X-FUTURE

I love um

I buy um

I preserve um